



Frequently Asked Questions

Notes:

1. This FAQ document was produced after consultation with clients and we hope it will be useful. It is split into 4 sections:

Section 1 - General questions about Ecas.

Section 2 – FAQ affecting group activities **and support for transport to attend activities.**

Section 3 – FAQ affecting **grants other than grants for support with transport to attend activities.**

Section 4 – FAQ affecting **befriending.**

2. This document is reviewed annually. Proposed amendments are passed to the Board of Directors for consideration, usually at their meeting in February.

3. This version reflects changes made at the Board meeting in May 2017.

Section 1 General Questions

1.1 What is Ecas and what does Ecas do?

Ecas is an Edinburgh based charity (number SCO102790), established in 1902 to help those who have a physical disability. We provide grants for individuals, run a range of therapeutic, social and learning activities (also referred to as classes), conduct research and campaigning, and run a befriending service.

1.2 How do you define “those who have a physical disability?”

Ecas follows the EHRC guideline that: “You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

- ‘substantial’ is more than minor or trivial, eg it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- ‘long-term’ means 12 months or more, eg a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection”

However, please remember that Ecas only provides support to people who have a physical disability. We regret that the following conditions, on their own, do not meet our criteria: psychiatric disorders, learning difficulties, behavioural disorders, developmental delay, Down’s syndrome, autism, visual or hearing impairment, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV and back pain.

1.3 Where must I live to receive help from Ecas?

You must be resident in Edinburgh or the Lothians for activities and grants, and Edinburgh for befriending.

1.4 What forms require to be completed by clients or their representatives?

We currently have forms for:

- i. Applications for activities.
- ii. Application for financial support with transport to and from activities.
- iii. A referral form for potential befriendees.
- iv. Applications for Ecas Grants Fund.

1.5 How can I get a form or find out more?

You can get a copy of the form you need, or get more information, by:

- i. Going to www.ecas-edinburgh.org
- ii. emailing info@ecas-edinburgh.org
- iii. Phoning the office on 0131 475 2344
- iv. Visiting the office at Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY

1.6 Do you have appropriate data protection procedures?

Yes. We are registered with the Information Commissioner and we have clear data protection policies and procedures. If you need more information about this please contact the office.

1.7 Are there any circumstances under which you would stop providing services for a client?

We expect all clients whatever service(s) or support they receive to behave in an appropriate manner, showing respect for each other, the staff and the volunteers. Should a client not adhere to these basic principles we would discuss this with them and warn them. We reserve the right, in the interests of other clients and to protect our staff and volunteers, to withdraw our services or support if a client does not behave appropriately. We would normally do this as follows:

- a. A recorded verbal warning from the Manager
- b. A written warning by the Manager
- c. A panel of 3 Directors and Chief Executive meeting to consider withdrawing or suspending Ecas services for the client.

In exceptional circumstances the Manager, in consultation with the Chief Executive, can suspend a client with immediate effect pending a panel of 3 Directors considering the case.

It is emphasised that Ecas hopes never to use these procedures, but the Directors do have a duty to protect all clients, volunteers and staff from abuse.

Section 2 Group Activities

2.1 Who can attend activities?

Anyone who lives in the City of Edinburgh or Lothians, who is over the age of 18 and physically disabled (see FAQ 1.2 for definition). There is no upper age limit to join our activities. You should normally be unable to access other activities in the community but, subject to space, consideration will be given to allowing those who meet the criteria at FAQ 1.2 and who could access other activities in the community to attend.

2.2 What activities are there?

Art, craft, swimming, yoga, seated tai chi, music, reading and computing are all run by qualified and experienced Group Leaders. These activities operate for 43 weeks per year.

Film afternoons.

We also have an internet café, meeting room and computing facilities which are available by prior arrangement for clients to use without support from the staff.

2.3 Where are the activities run?

Currently:

Yoga takes place at Longstone Resource Centre, 62 Longstone Street EH14 2DA.

Art groups are held at Norton Park and at Oxfords Neighbourhood Centre, EH13 9EU.

Seated tai chi, Craft, Reading, computer based courses, internet café and film afternoons are all at Norton Park, EH7 5QY.

Swimming is at Astley Ainslie Hospital , Grange Loan, Edinburgh. EH9 2HL

Music is at the Out of the Blue Drill Hall, 36 Dalmeny Street, EH6 8RG

All the venues are fully accessible and we pay particular attention to health and safety of our clients

We provide materials for all activities.

Locations and activities do change occasionally, so check with the office (0131 475 2344) for an up to date list.

2.4 Do you charge a fee?

We charge a fee for activities which is payable termly in advance. It is currently £1.15 per hour and is only refundable if Ecas cancels an activity or if a client is in hospital for 3 weeks or more.

2.5 Are there any concessionary fees?

No.

2.6 Can I attend more than one activity?

Ecas activities are heavily subscribed and subsidised. Clients can normally attend 1 activity for each subject (in this context art and craft are treated as one subject and all activities using a computer are treated as one subject, with the exception of internet cafe). Each client is also normally limited to a maximum of three activities. Should there be spare places these maximum numbers may be exceeded with the agreement of the Manager, on the understanding that should an activity become oversubscribed then the client will have to give up the additional place to allow a new client to join. Support with transport costs will be provided for a maximum of 2 activities (see FAQ 2.8).

2.7 If I am unable to attend an activity due to long term illness, how long will my place be kept open for?

Ecas will guarantee your place within an activity for 6 months. Your place will be kept open beyond this time unless there is a waiting list for that particular activity or you advise us not to.

2.8 Will you assist with transport costs?

Ecas appreciates that transport can be a very significant problem for those with a physical disability. Clients may, therefore, apply for financial support to help them to attend up to two activities. An application form for support with transport costs for activities is available online or from the office. The following general principles will apply:

- Successful applicants will be allocated a sum of money that can be used by booking taxis or HcL (formerly Handicabs) on the Ecas accounts by arrangement with the Ecas office.
- Although grants will be reviewed annually, they will be monitored monthly and excessive expenditure will be drawn to the client's attention. If expenditure continues at an excessive rate the Manager may suspend the client's access to taxis and/or HcL at Ecas' expense.
- Grants will assume that clients use HcL for 50% of their journeys. They will also assume that a taxicard is used when a client travels by taxi.
- Clients with a car or power chair provided through the Motability scheme or who are in receipt of the mobility component of either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will be expected to use these towards their costs.
- No client will be awarded more than £600 per year for each activity attended (see also restrictions in FAQ 2.6).
- If there is a choice of location for an activity Ecas will only provide support with transport costs based on the location nearest to the client's home.
- If a client believes the sum they have been awarded is insufficient to enable them to attend activities, they may provide further evidence to the grants committee and seek a review, provided that the total they seek is within the £600 limit. The committee's decision is final. It may take up to 5 months for a case to be reviewed.

It is emphasised that the aim of a grant is to provide support with transport costs, not to fully fund transport.

2.9 Will Ecas provide physical support and personal care?

Ecas staff are not trained to provide personal care, nor can they provide physical support (such as support for mobility impaired clients). Clients are welcome to bring their personal assistants or carers, and Ecas may provide a grant to assist in the cost of having a personal assistant for activities. Clients must bring appropriate mobility aids to allow them to move between their transport, the venue where the activities are held and other facilities unaided. Staff can provide only limited (and not intimate) assistance. Staff may have no training in moving and assisting.

2.10 What if I require personal assistance?

Ecas does not provide personal assistants, but would welcome a personal assistant if you bring your own. Ecas is not registered with the Care Commission to provide intimate care. More details are given in FAQ 2.9 and 2.11.

2.11 Is financial assistance available for a personal assistant?

If you need to employ a personal assistant to attend Ecas activities then Ecas may be able to help you identify funding from another source or, in exceptional cases and following consultation between Ecas and your care manager, provide funding for a set

number of hours at a rate acceptable to Ecas which will take account of social care rates charged by recognised agencies.

2.12 How long can I continue to participate in an activity ?

As long as you continue to meet the criteria in FAQ 1.2.

2.13 Are there any circumstances in which you would stop providing support with transport to a client?

The same rules for behaviour (see FAQ 1.7) apply to taxis and other transport. See also FAQ 2.8.

2.14 How does Ecas consult its clients?

We have a Client Consultation Group (CCG), chaired by an Ecas Director. Each class can appoint a representative. The CCG meets on request, and the representatives can contact the Manager between meetings as required. The office staff regularly visit activities to see the staff and clients and welcomes comments from clients. They also receive feedback from the Group Leaders. The full roles and responsibilities of the CCG are readily available to clients, as are the minutes of meetings.

2.15 Is there a complaints procedure?

We have a detailed complaints procedure with problems initially handled by the Group Leader or Manager, and if necessary being passed to the Chief Executive and ultimately the Board of Directors. Copies of the procedure are readily available to clients.

Section 3 Ecas Grants Fund

(for support with transport costs please see FAQ 2.8)

3.1 Who can apply for a grant?

Anyone who lives in the City of Edinburgh or Lothians and who is physically disabled. (See FAQ 1.2 for definition) Additionally, we regret that the following conditions do not meet the criteria for the Ecas Grants fund: Arthritis, obesity and cardio-respiratory conditions.

3.2 What can a grant be for?

The grant must be for something which will enhance your life.

Items approved in the past include holidays, special equipment, white goods, furniture, laptops and household equipment. Grants for support with maintenance and repair of powered wheelchairs or "scooters" must be accompanied by evidence of third party insurance.

3.3 Will I be reimbursed for an item or holiday I have already bought?

No, we do not provide grants for items you have already bought or holidays you have already paid for.

3.4 How much can I apply for and how often?

Standard grants of up to £750 for grants are considered; successful applicants must leave a gap of at least 2 years before reapplying. Higher grants up to £1500 are considered; successful applicants must leave a gap of at least 4 years before

reapplying. Grants above £1,500 will be considered on an exceptional basis. Grants provided for support with transport for activities under FAQ 2.8 do not count for the purposes of this question.

3.5 Do you always give monetary grants?

Grants are normally paid directly to the supplier of goods or services. In exceptional circumstances a cheque may be paid to the sponsor's organisation (a sponsor is the person supporting your application as described at FAQ 3.6). Ecas will not make cheques payable to the applicant.

3.6 How must my application be supported?

Applicants who meet the following criteria may submit their application directly to Ecas without a sponsor or medical report provided they supply the relevant supporting documentation. Ecas reserves the right to seek further medical information should Ecas consider it necessary. The criteria are:

- Being in receipt of DLA at the higher rate for mobility due to a physical disability (see FAQ 1.2 and 3.1) A copy of the award letter must be sent with the application.
- AND being in receipt of Income Support, Pension Credit or Housing Benefit. A copy of the award letter must be sent with the application.
- AND the applicant must state clearly on the application form the nature and impact of their physical disability.

All other applicants require a section to be completed by their sponsor (such as an NHS Community Health Worker, Practice Nurse, Social Worker or Health Visitor). We may also require a medical section to be completed by a GP or hospital doctor (see FAQ 3.7 for exceptions to this). If in doubt please consult the office. Ecas is not responsible for any fees incurred.

3.7 Do I have to provide a medical certificate?

If you receive DLA at the higher rate you do not need a medical certificate but will need to enclose a copy of your award letter. All other applicants will require a medical certificate. Ecas is not responsible for any fees incurred.

3.8 Do I have to provide details of my and my partner's income?

We need to try and ensure that the charity's money is spent to best effect, but we also try not to ask you too many personal details. In general, if you can provide evidence that you are in receipt of income support, housing benefit or pension credit then we will ask no further financial questions. If you cannot provide such evidence, or choose not to do so, then you can fill in a more detailed questionnaire and we will then look at those details.

3.9 Do I need to be assessed for specialised equipment?

Yes. Contact the Ecas office for advice.

3.10 How long do applications usually take?

Please allow up to 8 weeks of receiving all documentation. If it will take longer than that we will let you or your sponsor know. In extenuating circumstances a grant may be fast-tracked; please phone the office for details if required.

3.11 Can I ask to have a decision reviewed?

You can request one review of a grant decision that was taken out of committee. If you wish to ask for a review you should write to the Chief Executive who will ask the committee to review your case next time they meet. The committee's decision is final. It may take up to 5 months for a case to be reviewed.

3.12 Do we give grants to organisations?

Not at present.

Section 4 Befriending Service

4.1 What is the Befriending Service?

The Ecas Befriending Service provides support to isolated, physically disabled adults aged 18+, living in Edinburgh. By isolated we mean people who are not currently receiving support to attend activities, access their community or participate in leisure activities or whose social life is limited due to their impairment, an example may be: limited or no visits from family or circle of friends. Ecas conducts disclosure checks and trains volunteers to visit physically disabled adults on a one to one basis in their own home, providing companionship and a chance to access and participate in their community. Subject to the agreement of the befriender and befriended, there may also be opportunities for outings such as shopping, or visits to galleries, the cinema and so on. We also provide support, such as support with transport costs, to facilitate the continuation or renewal of existing friendships. This "facilitated friendships" scheme is particularly relevant to friends who are finding it difficult to meet; perhaps because they are now living in different parts of the city.

4.2 How do I find out more? Look at www.ecas-edinburgh.org and if you require more information please contact the office on 0131 475 2344.

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